

THE GLOBE AND MAIL

HD **Politics Briefing: Supreme Court ruling on carbon tax offers support to key piece of Liberals' climate-change plan**

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Also, Ottawa is stepping up efforts to protect Canadian intellectual property and strategically sensitive businesses

Hello,

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This is the daily Politics Briefing newsletter, written by Ian Bailey. It is available exclusively to our digital subscribers. If you're reading this on the web, subscribers can sign up for the Politics newsletter and more than 20 others on our newsletter signup page. Have any feedback? Let us know what you think.

Canada's Supreme Court has upheld the federal government's right to impose minimum carbon-pricing standards on the provinces.

Thursday's long-awaited ruling offers support to a key piece of the federal Liberal government's climate-change plan amid speculation that a federal election looms.

In a 6-3 decision, the court stressed Ottawa's authority under Canada's 1867 Constitution to legislate on matters of national concern - and the provinces' inability to fight global warming effectively on their own.

And the majority ruling, written by Chief Justice Richard Wagner, describes climate change as a "threat of the highest order to the country and indeed the world."

Globe and Mail justice reporter Sean Fine reports on the ruling [here](#).

And there is a primer on the issue [here](#).

The federal Liberal government seized on the ruling as a validation of their climate-change policies.

"This decision is a win for the millions of Canadians who believe we must build a prosperous economy that fights climate change - many of whom participated in the courts' hearings," Environment Minister Jonathan Wilkinson said in a statement.

In a reference to a vote by Conservative party delegates at a policy convention last week, Mr. Wilkinson said, "There should be no question as to whether climate change is real, or whether climate action is the right thing to do for the planet, for jobs and as human beings - only Conservative politicians are disputing that."

At the convention, 54 per cent of attending delegates voted against a resolution that would have included the line "climate change is real. The Conservative Party is willing to act" in the Tories' official policy document.

Responding to the ruling, Conservative Party Leader Erin O'Toole said that a Conservative government would still repeal the carbon tax as promised.

"We will protect the environment and fight the reality of climate change, but we won't do it by making the poorest pay more," Mr. O'Toole said in a statement.

"The Supreme Court recognized that policies related to emission reduction touch on federal and provincial jurisdiction. Conservatives prefer a collaborative approach to tackling climate change to make progress while also helping maintain a strong economy."

Mr. O'Toole repeated his commitment to release a "clear and comprehensive" climate plan. He has said the party will do so soon, before an expected federal election.

In Toronto, federal Green Party Leader Annamie Paul said she was encouraged that the Supreme Court has validated climate change as real, requiring a co-ordinated response across Canada, with a "critical role" for the federal government.

"We now know that we have a partner in the Supreme Court, that they recognize the seriousness, the urgency of the matter and the need for co-ordination and collaboration across levels of government," Ms. Paul told a news conference.

Columnist's Comment, Campbell Clark: "When the Supreme Court declares that the federal government's carbon-tax legislation is not only constitutional but also a necessary measure to address a threat to humanity, it is obviously a victory for Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his Liberals. But to really judge the short-term political implications, keep your eyes on the small-c conservative premiers who took the feds to court: Alberta Premier Jason Kenney, Saskatchewan's Scott Moe, and Ontario's Doug Ford. It is their tone that matters: will they ease off, or go back to fighting carbon taxes tooth and nail? The federal Conservative Leader, Erin O'Toole, doesn't want climate change to be a central issue in the next election campaign. But will influential conservative premiers be sending message that it is time to compromise, or time to fight?"

TODAY'S HEADLINES

Protecting Canadian businesses/intellectual property: The federal government is stepping up efforts to protect Canadian intellectual property and strategically sensitive businesses from falling into the hands of foreign governments and their proxies. Innovation Minister François-Philippe Champagne has unveiled revised guidelines laying out new areas of concern for Ottawa as it scrutinizes foreign takeovers and investments in key sectors of the economy as well as funding of high-end research.

COVID-19 Vaccines: Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is concerned by new trade controls on COVID-19 vaccines, but said his government will ensure that reported restrictions on exports from India and the European Union won't affect Canada's vaccine supply.

Military Investigation Reviewed: Defence Minister Harjit Sajjan has asked the acting chief of the defence staff to review an investigation into allegations of misconduct in the Royal Canadian Navy. The request follows a report published Tuesday by Global News stating an internal probe into sexual-misconduct allegations against senior naval officers had wrapped up before all witnesses or complainants were spoken to and that investigators concluded no wrongdoing took place.

Ontario Budget: Ontario will spend billions more fighting the health and economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and is projecting deficits into the last half of this decade, pushing up debt levels to unprecedented heights. The province's second pandemic budget forecasts a \$33.1-billion deficit in 2021-22, falling from the record \$38.5-billion worth of red ink caused largely by expenditures to combat COVID-19 in 2020-2021.

Anti-Asian Racism: From The National Post: Prime Minister Justin Trudeau says he believes a "confluence of events" that includes the COVID-19 pandemic and a more aggressive China on the world stage are contributing to rising rates of anti-Asian racism in Canada

PRIME MINISTER'S DAY

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau holds private meetings as well as discussions with David Malpass, president of the World Bank Group. The Prime Minister also hosts a virtual meeting with Jewish community leaders.

LEADERS' DAYS

Green party Leader Annamie Paul holds a news conference in Toronto to react to the Supreme Court decision on the constitutionality of the federal carbon tax.

OPINION

Andrew Coyne (The Globe and Mail) on daunting financial challenges for Ontario spotlighted by the provincial budget: "Ontario's fiscal situation was dire before the pandemic; it has grown much worse because of the pandemic; and it is going to get still worse after the pandemic is long past. That, mind, is the optimistic scenario - which is to say, the scenario on which the Ontario government has chosen to base its latest budget."

Robyn Urback (The Globe and Mail) on why the Conservatives need to act as if they intend to form government: "But the next election, whenever it will be, will likely occur in a climate distinct from the ones of the past. We will ostensibly be much closer to pandemic recovery, meaning there will be something of a general aura of optimism - even euphoria - in the air. Indeed, by then, whatever stumbles the federal government experienced in procuring vaccines early relative to peer nations might well be forgotten - or at least obscured by the joy of being able to eat in a restaurant without the gentle hum of anxiety in the background - leaving Mr. O'Toole with the challenge of getting Canadians to pay attention to a promise of change when things, compared to the recent past, will seem pretty good."

Don Martin (CTV) on the looming federal election: "Circle June 14 on your calendar as election day."

READERS' POLITICAL NEWSLETTER QUESTIONS

We recently asked Politics-Briefing newsletter readers if they have any questions for the bureau. Thank you to reader Marie Cocking of Vancouver, who sent in our first question.

Marie writes: As I understand the Canadian parliamentary system, budgetary allocation decisions must be made in Parliament. How long, then, can a government go without introducing a budget and still be said to be governing with the confidence of the House?

We asked Bill Curry, who covers finance, to answer.

Bill Curry: "Thanks for the question. The last federal budget was tabled on March 19, 2019. Researchers at the Library of Parliament recently went through all federal budget dates since Confederation and found that this is the longest gap between budgets in Canadian history. The fact that this happened during a period in which the Liberals only hold a minority of seats in the House of Commons shows that a budget is not technically necessary for a government to maintain the confidence of the House. While a budget puts all of the government's spending plans into a single package, what MPs actually vote on to approve spending are called supply bills. Each department produces spending requests - which are called estimates - for Parliament to review and approve. After MPs have had a few weeks to review the estimates - which can include calling public servants and ministers to explain this spending - the government introduces a supply bill that is based on the estimates. (For anyone who wants more information on this, the process is explained here. The House has continued to approve supply bills throughout this period without a budget, which is why the government maintains the confidence of the House and the operation of government continues. As we recently wrote, however, the lack of a budget means MPs have to approve piecemeal spending plans without the benefit of an overarching budget plan."

READERS' POLITICAL NEWSLETTER QUESTIONS

Send along your political questions and we will look at getting answers to run in this newsletter. It's not possible to answer each one personally. Questions and answers will be edited for length and clarity.

Got a news tip that you'd like us to look into? E-mail us at tips@globeandmail.com. Need to share documents securely? Reach out via SecureDrop

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